



National Transportation Safety Board Aviation Accident Data Summary

Location:	SAIPAN, Mali	Accident Number:	LAX98LA046
Date & Time:	11/26/1997, 0722	Registration:	N1256H
Aircraft:	Piper PA-32-300	Injuries:	1 Minor
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General Aviation -		

Analysis

The pilot was conducting a maintenance test flight in the traffic pattern when the engine lost power and he made a forced landing. Two days before the accident test flight, a company pilot made an unscheduled landing due to a rough running engine with a vibration. A review of the aircraft inspection discrepancy logs and maintenance records revealed that maintenance personnel removed and cleaned the fuel injector nozzles, the servo unit screen was flushed, and a compression check was completed. Four engine ground runs were conducted with a rough running engine and vibrations noted in the first three runs. The fourth ground run did not note any anomalies. Review of the records found two operator's inspection discrepancy records for this aircraft. Examination of the documents disclosed that they are essentially the same, except for item number 3. On the first document the item 3 discrepancy stated that the No. 5 cylinder fuel injector nozzle needed replacement, with a further note that none were in stock. On the second document item 3 said that the fuel injector nozzles were cleaned and reinstalled, and that a ground run-up was normal. The company dispatcher instructed the pilot to perform the test flight as the airplane was scheduled to return to service the same day. The pilot performed the ground checklist, which included checking the magnetos and propeller. He did not note any discrepancies. After takeoff no engine performance malfunctions were noted; however, while on base leg, the aircraft engine banged three times and then parts flew through the engine cowling. The cowling separated and struck the empennage. The pilot subsequently ditched the aircraft in the ocean, where it sank and was not recovered.

Probable Cause

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: The loss of engine power for undetermined reasons that resulted in the pilot ditching the aircraft into the ocean.

Findings

Occurrence #1: LOSS OF ENGINE POWER(TOTAL) - MECH FAILURE/MALF
Phase of Operation: APPROACH - VFR PATTERN - BASE LEG/BASE TO FINAL

Findings

1. FUEL SYSTEM,INJECTOR - FLOW RESTRICTED
2. POWERPLANT - DISINTEGRATED
3. COOLING SYSTEM,COWLING - SEPARATION
4. (C) REASON FOR OCCURRENCE UNDETERMINED

Occurrence #2: FORCED LANDING
Phase of Operation: EMERGENCY DESCENT/LANDING

Occurrence #3: DITCHING
Phase of Operation: EMERGENCY DESCENT/LANDING

Findings
5. TERRAIN CONDITION - WATER

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Airline Transport; Flight Instructor; Commercial	Age:	38
Airplane Rating(s):	Multi-engine Land; Single-engine Land	Instrument Rating(s):	Airplane
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	Instructor Rating(s):	Airplane Multi-engine; Airplane Single-engine; Instrument Airplane
Flight Time:	3000 hours (Total, all aircraft), 50 hours (Total, this make and model), 90 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 30 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 1 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Piper	Registration:	N1256H
Model/Series:	PA-32-300 PA-32-300	Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Operator:	PACIFIC ISLANDS AVIATION	Engine Manufacturer:	Lycoming
Operating Certificate(s) Held:	Commuter Air Carrier (135)	Engine Model/Series:	IO-540-KIG5
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General Aviation -		

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual Conditions	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	, 0 ft msl	Weather Information Source:	Pilot
Lowest Ceiling:	Broken / 10000 ft agl	Wind Speed/Gusts, Direction:	10 knots / , 8°
Temperature:	27° C	Visibility	5 Miles
Precipitation and Obscuration:			
Departure Point:	CHALAN-KANOA, MP (9695)	Destination:	

Airport Information

Airport:	SAIPAN INTERNATIONAL (SPN)	Runway Surface Type:	
Runway Used:	0	Runway Surface Condition:	
Runway Length/Width:			

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 Minor	Aircraft Damage:	Destroyed
Passenger Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Latitude, Longitude:			

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	TEALEYE C CORNEJO	Adopted Date:	04/15/1999
Investigation Docket:	NTSB accident and incident dockets serve as permanent archival information for the NTSB's investigations. Dockets released prior to June 1, 2009 are publicly available from the NTSB's Record Management Division at pubinq@ntsb.gov , or at 800-877-6799. Dockets released after this date are available at http://dms.nts.gov/pubdms/ .		

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